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AUTHOR	Patterson, Robert A.
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ABSTRACT

A study attempted to ascertain if practical and flexible criteria could be developed that would be useful as guidelines to school districts in the state of Washington in meeting current staffing problems. The guidelines focused on and incorporated 1) current education objectives, 2) psycho-sociological influences, 3) changing methods of education, 4) technology, and 5) new organizational arrangements into a system for personnel management. Four procedures for developing the guidelines were 1) review of pertinent studies in the field of staffing, 2) analysis of annual personnel reports filed by all Washington school districts with the state, 3) review of the literature to identify emerging directions in staffing practices, and 4) interviews with 180 superintendents in the state on perceptions of staffing needs. Guidelines were drawn from an analysis of the six major trends in staffing practices which were identified: 1) greater use of collegial organization; 2) increased staff specialization; 3) greater use of teacher terms; 4) the increasing influence of the personnel function; 5) application of a systems approach to personnel management; and 6) increased use of the evaluation process. (This paper, which summarizes processes and conclusions of Patterson's doctoral dissertation, contains the 29 guidelines, grouped according to the six trends, and diagrams of four differentiated staffing models incorporating them.) (JS)

at your service SIRS SCHOOL INFORMATION AND RESEARCH SERVICE

100 CROCKETT STREET, ROOM 224 • SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98109 • TELEPHONE AT 4-3660, EXT. 54

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GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFFING MODELS

Growth in population and school enrollment is an ubiquitous phenomenon cropping up throughout the world. Not only do we hear grim warnings by the economists and agronomists of the acute survival problem facing the human race, we know at first hand the problems school districts face as this growth problem continues to beset many areas throughout the state.

One of the facets of the dilemma is encountered as the district boards and administration seek to set up a set of program priorities in growing school districts. This is evident when it becomes manifest that there must be qualified staff members added to maintain a master priority list of quality goals and objectives for the schools' program.

Mr. Robert Patterson's study, Criteria for a Staff Utilization Model for School Districts in the State of Washington, a doctoral dissertation, seeks to find the pattern or criteria used by growing school systems as they develop their own staffing guidelines.

We would like to be able to duplicate the entire thesis but we question the advisability of this because of its length. We will place our copy of the dissertation in our lending library and will be delighted to mail it to SIRS' members on request.

We know of efforts on the part of school staffs in at least two parts of the state to develop a "mini-survey' within their general geographical area to attempt to discover the status quo in the field of staffing. We hope this report, or Mr. Patterson's full dissertation, will be found valuable.

Since our members are busy people we have, with the help of Mr. Patterson, extracted the basic information in his study so our potential readers may swiftly determine how much they may want to read to grasp the relevancy of Mr. Patterson's study for their own local growth problems.

Morton A. Johnson
Director

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GUIDELINES FOR

SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFFING MODELS

by

ROBERT A. PATTERSON

School staffing patterns must change in order for them to be more relevant to the needs of society and to provide for new educational methods and technology in staffing practices. Broad social forces acting upon the schools will continue to bring about this change.

The roles of the school, the learner, the teacher, and the administrator are all undergoing change. The implications for staffing are numerous: (1) a need for new staff relationships; (2) a greater differentiation in responsibility; (3) a greater opportunity for people outside the confines of traditional education systems, both professional and technical, to be included in staffing arrangements; (4) a greater emphasis on continuous planning and evaluation in staff assignments; (5) the planned inclusion of technological aids in the educational process wherever they might supplement or replace man; (6) more precise job analysis and more carefully delineated job descriptions; (7) acceptance by school districts of a greater responsibility for the preparation and development of educational policy and procedures.

Under SIRS auspices a study was undertaken to ascertain if practical and flexible criteria could be developed that would be useful as guidelines to school districts in the state of Washington in meeting current staffing problems. The study sought to develop guidelines which could serve as a practical tool for superintendents and other administrators concerned with the personnel function of a public school system. The guidelines, focused and incorporated (1) current educational objectives, (2) psycho-sociological influences, (3) changing methods of education, (4) technology, and (5) new organizational arrangements into a system for personnel management.

Four major tasks were undertaken as procedures for developing the guidelines: (1) a review of pertinent studies in the field of staffing was made to document the current trends in education which require changes in the way schools are staffed; (2) an analysis of the Annual Personnel Report (Form F-75) filed by every school district in the state of Washington with the State Department of Education was made to determine present practice; (3) a review of the literature was conducted to identify emerging directions in staffing practices; and (4) 180 superintendents in the state were queried for their perceptions of staffing trends.

Eleven staffing trends emerged from these investigations. They include:

1. An increase in the ratio of staff to students, by 1973, among professional and paraprofessional staff members.

2. A greater use of the team approach in providing varied learning activities.

3. An increase in the amount of time for planning, as part of the job, for all personnel.

4. A greater diversification of staffs through the addition of new positions.

5. Greater differentiation in the responsibilities of instructional personnel.

6. An increase in the use of technological equipment and in the greater diversity of equipment available for teaching-learning purposes.

7. An intensification of recruiting efforts with special emphasis on the community college, the community and graduate programs.

8. Greater involvement by the staff in the recruiting process.

9. Greater involvement in the reassignment and development of district personnel by the school district staff.

10. Increased use of job descriptions as a means of identifying responsibilities and relationships.

11. Greater use of written evaluative procedures by the staff, with observation and discussion included in the process, and staff involvement included in the development and application of evaluative techniques.

Six major trends in staffing practices were identified. They include: (1) greater use of collegial organization; (2) increased staff specialization; (3) greater use of teacher teams; (4) the increasing influence of the personnel function; (5) application of a systems approach to personnel management; and (6) increased use of the evaluation process.

Guidelines were drawn from an analysis of these six trends in staffing practices. Each guideline was developed as an extension of discernible trends and as a better means of meeting current personnel needs. Twenty-nine guidelines grouped according to the major trend in staffing practice are suggested:

I. Use of Collegial Organization

School districts need an organization that is more relevant to contemporary demands and more flexible and democratic in operation. There is need for an open system, one that has the means to communicate and interact with the total community. New educational methods and technology are making decentralization of authority and greater involvement of the staff in the decision making process necessary. Each school district should be organized to meet specific goals and needs, be responsive to change and able to project into the future. Arrangements are necessary for deriving school objectives from projected social change. Suggested guidelines for achieving a collegial structure include:

1. The system is able to bring to bear, at any time, all the human competencies and energies available to focus on specific problems.

2. A broader base for the decision making process is established by enabling and encouraging the total staff to accept greater responsibility for decisions.

3. The organizational structure enables the educational program to focus on the needs of individual pupils.

4. The organizational structure allows for the incorporation and efficient use of the many technological aids becoming available.

5. The process encourages the use of research, development, evaluation and feedback through an organized and well-developed structure.

II. Increasing Staff Specialization

The changing objectives and methods of education are creating a need for greater specialization of personnel. Professional school personnel must break out of their isolation, accept differences in responsibility, develop cooperative working relationships with other professionals, para-professionals and lay assistants. The instructional and administrative functions require varying levels of competence as well as differences in preparation. Both national and state trends demonstrate this growing specialization. Nationally, the first was the development of various roles to replace the traditional classroom teacher, specialists in presentation, group interaction and curriculum design. The second, was the creation of new supporting roles: (1) professional specialists in content, media, systems and management, (2) para-professionals, i.e., media technicians, and assistant instructors, and (3) personnel with little or no training, such as clericals and playground or lunchroom supervisors. At the state level there is developing: (1) greater differentiation of the responsibilities of instructional personnel, and (2) greater diversification in the assignment of personnel through the creation of new positions. Guidelines agreed upon to meet the needs of specialization include:

1. Means are available to focus the diverse talents and efforts of specialists on the achievement of educational goals.

2. Procedures exist for the orientation of various personnel to the organization and to each other.

3. Channels of communication are available to all personnel who are involved in planning.

4. Provisions are included for the interaction of the specialists with the total school staff.

5. Time for planning on the job is alloted a high priority.

III. Increasing Influence of the Personnel Function

The influence of the personnel function on the total school district operation has greatly increased because of the crucial role of the services the function provides. Orientation has increased in importance, in ratio to the growing complexity of the organization, and the increased differentiation in jobs. The writing of job descriptions has become critical to the implementation of specialization and differentiation in staffing. Recruiting has taken on added importance as education has been forced to compete with industry and government for personnel, and the shortage of trained personnel has become more acute. The training and development of district personnel have become more important because of the increasing rate of change in schools, the growing complexity of the educational process, and the fact that many new positions must be filled from within the district. Greater emphasis has been directed to the process of evaluation, for both the individual and the educational program to better measure goal achievement, identify weaknesses, and establish the means for the change.

Considerable support for the growing importance of personnel services was noted from an analysis of the state survey. Present trends include: (1) recruiting efforts are more dispersed; (2) greater involvement in the recruiting process by the staff; (3) greater resort to use of written job descriptions; (4) more involvement in the reassignment and training of personnel; and (5) commitment to written evaluative procedures for the staff.

The guidelines for achieving this purpose are based on the data that (1) identify services that need to be included in the personnel function, and (2) provide evidence of their growing importance.

1. The personnel function is defined with responsibilities and limitations.

2. Leadership responsibility for the personnel function is assigned.

3. There is a functioning process which orients the employee to his job and the organization.

4. Written job descriptions are provided for all positions. These define: (1) what a person is to do; (2) how, and how well, the job is to be done; and (3) his relationship to others.

5. A recruiting program exists, which is directed to the: (1) four year college, (2) two year college, (3) graduate school, (4) community, and (5) industry.

6. The total staff is involved in the recruiting process.

7. A responsibility is accepted by the district for the education and development of the staff.

8. An evaluation and feedback process exists, for both personnel and the education program, which includes indentification of weaknesses and omissions, as well as the means for changing and establishing new practices.

IV. Application of a Systems Approach to Personnel Management

The systems approach provides a framework for consideration of functions and resources as well as an ordered sequence for the accomplishment of objectives. A systems approach to the administration of the personnel function would designate the means for (1) adding new positions and personnel; (2) making use of technological innovations; (3) recruiting; (4) training and re-educating personnel; and (5) evaluating the process. The systems approach has emerged as the most efficient means for both involving the staff in, and operating, the personnel function. The systems approach is a tool to work with, yet may be recognized as an attitude, or commitment, to an orderly process on the part of those involved.

The following guidelines are suggested as being helpful in the implementation of a systems approach to the personnel function of a school district:

1. A commitment exists to a deliberate and orderly program for the operation of the personnel function.

2. The educational objectives of the district are defined in terms of tasks to be accomplished.

3. The staff is involved in the total personnel process: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

4. The system is flexible; it provides the means for the incorporation of new concepts and change.

V. Increased Use of the Evaluation Process

Another dimension which is critical to the development of a staffing model includes: (1) the means for the evaluation of staffing adequacy and quality; (2) comparative measures for assistance in incorporating new positions; and (3) an indication of priorities for the establishment of staff ratios within the system. There are five guidelines helpful to achieving this purpose:

1. The ratio of total staff to students.

2. The addition of non-professional personnel.

3. The amount of training and breadth of experience of the staff.

4. The likelihood of quality education increases with the proximity of the supporting experts to the students.

5. The needs of students, goals of the district, and the adoption of new technology and methods should dictate the creation of new positions.

VI. Summary

The 29 guidelines which have evolved from this study are based on the staffing trends that appear in the literature and in the staffing projections of practicing educators in the field. The guidelines were developed as aide to school officials in the State of Washington for constructing their own staffing models; the guidelines were constructed broadly enough to be adaptable to the situation and purposes of all school districts regardless of size. The guidelines should not be considered as universally validated rules for staffing.

A sample of four different staffing models, developed by the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, is appended as a guide. The models incorporate some of the guidelines developed in this study.

STAFF DIFFERENTIATION
(Model #1)

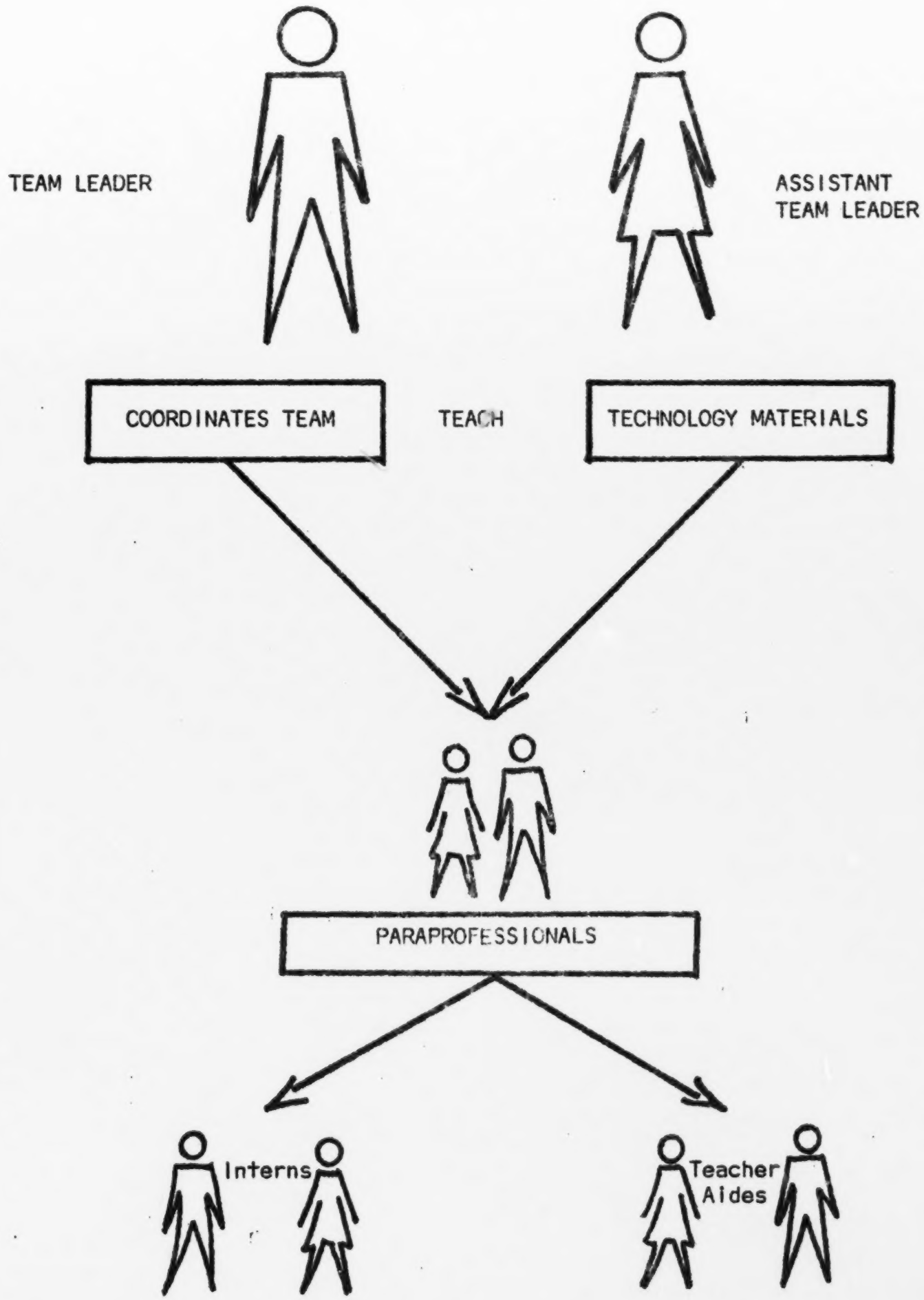
TEACHER

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

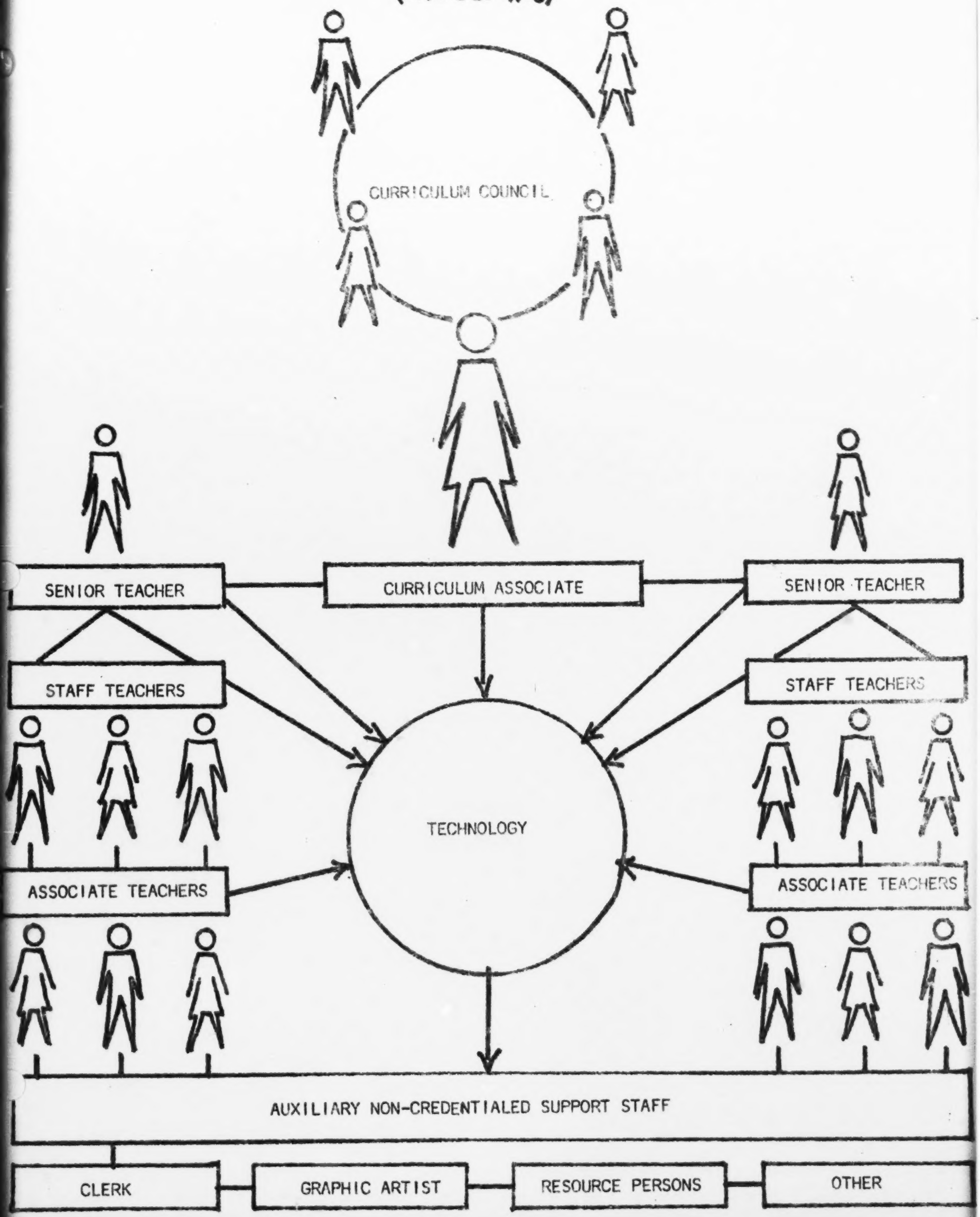
TEACHER AIDE

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

INSTRUCTION TEAM
STAFF DIFFERENTIATION
(Model #2)



DIFFERENTIATED STAFF
(Model #3)



DIFFERENTIATED STAFF
(Model #4)